



Myth vs. Fact

Proposed Rules for Educator Preparation and Licensing

Since first announced in June, there have been many changes in the provisions of the REPA proposal. This document aims to provide the most accurate, up-to-date information on the proposed rules as well as to dispel some common misconceptions about how the rules will affect current and future teachers. It is important to note that the most recent version of the proposal incorporates comments and discussions based on previous versions.

Citations from the actual REPA proposal have been included wherever possible. Visit <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/20090930-IR-515090481PRA.xml.pdf> to view the full document.

Myth: *The proposed changes to the licensing rules, if adopted, will undermine the teaching profession and be harmful to education in Indiana.*

FACT: The REPA proposal combines several of the best features of the past two licensing systems in Indiana (Rules 46-47 and Rules 2002), creating revisions that provide more flexibility for persons who seek to become licensed educators.

By requiring a content-area major for secondary teachers, REPA will ensure future secondary teachers have a deep content knowledge of the courses they'll be teaching in order to be fully compliant with the Highly Qualified teacher provision of No Child Left Behind. (515 IAC 3-1-1, p. 21-22.)

The proposal will improve instructional quality and clean up the bureaucratic red tape by giving local school administrators the ability to make decisions that were once managed by the IDOE, making it simpler for teachers and administrators to renew licenses. (515 IAC 1-7-14, p. 19-20.). The REPA proposal also updates regulations and removes redundancies and outdated provisions, eliminating nearly 100 pages from the original rule.

Myth: *The REPA eliminates pedagogy requirements for new teachers.*

FACT: The REPA proposal does not eliminate pedagogy. It seeks to capture the pedagogical concepts which are "essential" and strike a balance between content knowledge and pedagogy. (515 IAC 8-1-1.4, p. 29-30; 515 IAC 8-1-1.6, p. 31.)

Myth: *The REPA proposal allows persons to teach who have no field experience.*

FACT: The REPA proposal requires all teaching candidates to complete nine weeks of student teaching. (515 IAC 8-1-1.4, p. 29-30; 515 IAC 8-1-1.6, p. 31.)

Myth: *The REPA proposal will require teachers with an Accomplished Practitioner license to renew every five years.*

FACT: Under REPA, an Accomplished Practitioner license will *always* be renewed for ten-year periods, instead of every five years after an initial ten-year license, as current regulations mandate.

Myth: *The REPA proposal has "removed any barrier for those with a criminal background to be licensed in Indiana."*

FACT: The Indiana General Assembly in its 2009 session re-defined the process for reviewing criminal backgrounds of all persons who interact with children in Indiana's accredited schools by making it an employment process rather than a licensing process. Under new state law, local schools must require expanded criminal history checks for all new hires after July 1, 2009. This requirement applies to all new school employees who have direct and ongoing contact with students, not just teachers. The legislature repealed the provision requiring teaching applicants to submit a limited criminal history at the time they apply for a teaching license.

The REPA proposal only make necessary changes to comply with this new state law.

Myth: *Currently licensed teachers will be required to pass tests on both instructional and content-area knowledge upon renewing their licenses.*

FACT: The REPA proposal does not require teachers currently licensed to take a "re-licensing test" for continued teaching or license renewal. New applicants will be required to pass such tests, but current teachers or license holders will not. Future teachers will be required to pass content (PRAXIS II) exams for all content areas as a condition of initial licensure. This will ensure future teachers will be Highly Qualified for their assignment in Indiana's accredited schools.

Once REPA is adopted and becomes effective, any teacher wanting to add an endorsement area to his or her license may do so by passing the content-area test. Under REPA, teachers no longer will be required to obtain additional college coursework to add endorsements. This will save teachers thousands of dollars in tuition. (515 IAC 8-2-1, p. 52-53.)

Myth: *The proposed rules would not allow a teacher who has an elementary license with a subject-area middle school endorsement to continue teaching at the middle school level.*

FACT: Teachers with this type of license will still be able to teach at the middle school level. These teachers will be grandfathered into the new rules and will automatically receive comparable REPA licenses, including the subject-area middle school endorsement. The intent of the rule is not to remove any teachers from teaching assignments for which they are properly licensed (515 IAC 9-1-2, p. 54-55).

Myth: *The DOE is "rushing" the process to change Indiana's educator licensing and preparation rules.*

FACT: At its very first meeting on June 25, 2009, the consensus of the Advisory Board was that Indiana's licensing and teacher preparation rules needed to be revised. The Advisory Board reviewed and made changes to several drafts of the REPA at its July 29, 2009, and August 20, 2009 meetings. Advisory Board members received feedback from the public about the REPA between June 25, 2009, and September 2, 2009. Much of that feedback was incorporated into the document presented on September 3, 2009, when the board voted (15 to 4) to move the REPA into the public hearing process. It is that document that was published in the Indiana Register and on which public comment and the public hearings will be based.

Three public hearings have been scheduled to allow for public comment.

- October 27, 2009, at Rochester High School, 1 Zebra Lane Rochester, IN 46975

- October 29, 2009, at Scottsburg Middle School, 425 South Third Street, Scottsburg, IN 47170
- November 2, 2009, at Indiana State Library, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Comments may also be submitted online at www.doe.in.gov/repacomment until October 31, 2009.

The board will consider public comments and potential changes to the proposal at future meetings. The earliest the proposals could be enacted is July 31, 2010.

Myth: *All educators, including elementary school teachers, would have to hold a bachelor's degree with a major in the subject they're teaching.*

FACT: Current license holders will remain unaffected by new curriculum options. Future elementary school teachers may still complete the traditional “degree in elementary education” without a bachelor’s degree with a major in their subject. Only future secondary teachers would be required to receive a bachelor’s degree in their content area combined with a minor in education. (515 IAC 8-1-1.4, p. 29-30; 515 IAC 8-1-1.6, p. 31.)

Myth: *Under the REPA proposal, elementary and secondary teachers would be eligible for licensure with certification from the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), a certification program designed specifically for career changers.*

FACT: ABCTE is not a program approved by the proposed rule. The rule does not approve any new alternative programs at this time. Rather, the proposed rule allows the board to review new alternative programs at a later date to determine whether such options are suitable. (515 IAC 8-1-1.4, p. 29-30; 515 IAC 8-1-1.6, p. 31; 515 IAC 3-1-1, p. 21-23.)

Myth: *Principals will be “burdened” by being required to certify credits for teachers’ applications for license renewal.*

FACT: First, educators will qualify for license renewal through completion of professional growth experiences documented at the local level. However, college and university coursework is not excluded from the definition of professional growth experiences and counts toward the professional growth points needed for license renewal. Under REPA, principals will sign off on teachers’ professional development training, affirming that the professional growth experiences are relevant to the needs of their students. Principals know their students and teachers best and are therefore better suited to manage the renewal process than DOE employees in Indianapolis. Teachers remain responsible for logging and keeping track of their training on a license renewal report submitted with their renewal application.

Myth: *Psychologists, counselors, social workers, and speech-language-hearing clinicians would no longer be licensed by the Department of Education.*

FACT: Because psychologists, counselors, social workers and speech-language-hearing clinicians are also licensed by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency, one early proposal would have eliminated this dual licensing requirement by not requiring an additional license from DOE. After discussions with these groups and feedback from professionals, the proposal has been removed. Psychologists, social workers, counselors and speech-language-hearing clinicians will continue to be licensed by both the IPLA and DOE. However, school nurses will no longer be licensed by the DOE because they are licensed by IPLA and do not instruct students or participate in curriculum programming of students in a school setting. This will save nurses the cost of applying for a second license from DOE. (515 IAC 1-7-14, p. 19-21.)

